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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0848
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1257
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ FEB MANAGUA 0120
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0069
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0072
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1648

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000177

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STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

AMEMBASSIES POR PAO, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [VE](#) [BL](#) [NU](#) [CU](#) [EC](#) [CI](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - LULA, KIRCHNER, AND CHAVEZ

¶1. On January 31, Chile's conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 101,000) carried a column by Venezuelan political analyst Alberto Garrido entitled, "Lula and Kirchner's 'Warning' to Chavez."

¶2. "The leak to the press of an alleged warning from Lula (da Silva) and (Nestor) Kirchner to Chavez 'not to take steps that could weaken Venezuela's democracy' is only a summer night's dream for political sectors and public opinion in Latin America and the world.... The array of economic integration agreements signed by Chavez with Lula and Kirchner...can solely be explained in the framework of Chavez' intent to promote the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean Unified Nation (Patria Grande Latinoamericana y Caribe), for which there is already an embryo, which is the Bolivarian Confederation of Nations (Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua).... Withdrawing from a relationship with Chavez could be costly for Lula and Kirchner. In addition to fragmenting Mercosur, Brazil would lose a commercial partner that in 2006 generated a US\$ 3 billion trade surplus and Argentina would upset its most important creditor.

¶3. "As if this were not enough, Lula and Kirchner are looking at the Southern Gas Pipeline, a mid-term project largely financed by Chavez, as a strategic solution to the gas supply problem. Therefore, the 'warning'- if there ever was one -- is just words blowing in the wind."

KELLY